**History of the Oreo Cookie**

When discussing the twentieth century, we often compare and contrast life from the year 1900 to the year 2000. We all realize that in the year 1900, people didn't have cars, couldn't fly in airplanes, and didn't have microwaves. Yet, there is another item that those in the year 1900 did not have and those in the year 2000 took for granted - Oreo cookies.

Most of us have grown up with Oreo cookies. There are photos of us with chocolaty mustaches across our lips. They've caused great disputes as to the best way to eat them - dunking them in milk or twisting off one side and eating the middle first. Besides eating them plain, there are recipes galore on how to use Oreos in cakes, milkshakes, and additional desserts. Oreos had become part of twentieth century culture.

Though most of us have spent our life cherishing Oreo cookies, did you know that since their introduction in 1912, the Oreo cookie has become the best selling cookie in the U.S.?

**Oreos Are Introduced**

In 1898, several baking companies merged to form the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco), the maker of Oreo cookies. By 1902, Nabisco created Barnum's Animal cookies and made them famous by selling them in a little box designed like a cage with a string attached (to hang on Christmas trees).

In 1912, Nabisco had a new idea for a cookie - two chocolate disks with a crème filling in between. The first Oreo cookie looked very similar to the Oreo cookie of today, with only a slight difference in the design on the chocolate disks.

The shape and design of the Oreo cookie didn't change much until Nabisco began selling various versions of the cookie. In 1975, Nabisco released their DOUBLE STUF Oreos. Nabisco continued to create variations: 1987 -- Fudge covered Oreos introduced  
1991 -- Halloween Oreos introduced; 1995 -- Christmas Oreos introduced

**The Mysterious Name**

So how did the Oreo get its name? The people at Nabisco aren't quite sure. Some believe that the cookie's name was taken from the French word for gold, "or" (the main color on early Oreo packages). Others claim the name stemmed from the shape of a hill-shaped test version; thus naming the cookie in Greek for mountain, "Oreo." Still others believe the name is a combination of taking the "re" from "cream" and placing it between the two "o"s in "chocolate" - making "o-re-o." And still others believe that the cookie was named Oreo because it was short and easy to pronounce.

No matter how it got named, over 362 billion Oreo cookies have been sold since it was first introduced in 1912, making it the best selling cookie of the 20th century.